

# Soldiers 'determined' to make a difference

Continued from pg. 1

"We have had two deaths (recently) and soldiers that were seriously injured. The French also lost a soldier," said Smith. "Although we are constantly being reminded of the Taliban's presence, our soldiers are well trained and can easily rise to this challenge."

He said the recent deaths of the Canadian soldiers "have, of course, affected all of us."

"Many here are friends of the fallen soldiers and their families. That said, we are fiercely determined to make a positive difference in the quality of life for Afghans."

Smith, who is single, works seven days a week— 14-hour days Monday through Saturday, and Sundays he begins at noon.

He said he does not feel he's in danger, but stressed that all the military personnel are carrying weapons.

"The soldiers cannot leave the compound without being in a convoy. The area is heavily mined so one would not be inclined to go for a stroll."

The roads in the area are potholed and largely chaotic. Accidents are commonplace.

"Imagine driving to the cottage on a back dirt road multiplied tenfold," said Smith, who added that the Canadian military equipment is excellent and adapts to every situation.

He said the Afghan people are extremely poor and their living conditions are far below those of Canadians. They are very friendly to the soldiers, he said, and grateful they are there.

"They are a people that have been tormented by terrorism and violence and it has



Lieutenant-Colonel Randy Smith, a former Georgetown resident, is serving a tour in Afghanistan— but his role is a little different than the usual soldier. He's a lawyer.

*Submitted photo*

to stop," he said.

When asked to comment on the sentiment of some Canadians who don't feel Canadian soldiers should be in Afghanistan, Smith said he strongly believes otherwise.

"Afghanistan is a poor country that continues to be confronted by terrorists and with extreme violence. Canada's goal is to help the Afghan people," he said. "All Canadians serving here are prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, so that the Afghan people may one day enjoy a quality of life that is not only secure but safe."

The recent visit by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper to Afghanistan was a real boost for the soldiers, said Smith, who has nearly 27 years service with the Canadian Armed Forces.

"He was extremely well received by all of us," said Smith, who was thrilled to meet the PM. "What a great thing he has done for us by coming to visit so early in his new job. Morale went up 150%. He is solidly behind us in what we are trying to do."

Ann is looking forward to May when her son will be home for a vacation and says the weekly calls she gets from him are "very comforting."

She can't imagine what it must have been like in past wars and conflicts where people back home in Canada had no contact with their loved ones except for letters that could take weeks to arrive, she said.

*(Lisa Tallyn can be reached at ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)*

# Local man pleads guilty to reduced charge in slaying of disabled man

BY STEPHANIE THIESSEN  
Special to The IFP

Two men charged with first-degree murder in the violent slaying of a Milton man pleaded guilty to lesser charges last week.

The men both pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder, with Mississauga resident John McClatchey, 49, pleading guilty to manslaughter and Halton Hills resident James McDonough, 41, pleading guilty to second-degree murder in the death of Brian Stockton, a 48-year-old father and husband who was physically disabled.

The guilty pleas were entered February 27 at Superior Court of Justice in Milton before Justice Bruce Durno.

Crown Attorney Monica Mackenzie said she didn't have much to say about the proceedings. "There's not a lot I can say because it's (the case) still before the court."

The sentencing will be held tomorrow (Thursday) at 11 a.m. in Milton.

Stockton's badly burned body was discovered when crews from the Milton Fire Department extinguished a flaming car in June, 2004 behind Traffix transport company on Regional Road 25, just north of Hwy. 401.

A short distance away, a pool of blood was found by police in front of McKeown Collision, also on Regional Road 25. Police said at the time the two crime scenes were connected.

The two accused were arrested at their homes the next day. Police said the suspects and the victim were acquaintances.

Stockton was the father of a teenaged son and daughter.

John Rosen, defence lawyer for McDonough, didn't respond at press time to a request for an interview.

Rosen is well known in the media after defending serial murderer Paul Bernardo, taking over from Ken Murray in September of 1994.

The slaying of Stockton has been the only murder in Milton in the past five years.

## Police blotter

# Lock it or lose it, police warn after break-ins

Halton Police are reminding area residents to lock their vehicles after a rash of car break-ins in Georgetown recently.

All the vehicles entered were unlocked. A police spokesperson says a locked vehicle acts as a deterrent for thieves who are looking for an easy target.

Two of the break-ins occurred at a Margaret St. residence late Thursday or early Friday. A GMC pickup truck and an Oldsmobile were entered and a quantity of change was taken.

Change was also taken that same night from a Chevrolet Impala on Hillside Dr.

Late Sunday or early Monday a stereo faceplate and CDs were taken from an unlocked Honda parked at a Mary St. resi-

dence. The CDs were later found scattered on the lawn.

That same night identification was taken from a Toyota van parked on Queen St. and CDs and coins were taken from a Chevrolet minivan parked at a Morris St. home.

• • •

An Acton man was charged with having over 80 mg of alcohol in 100 ml of blood after police stopped a vehicle for speeding on Hwy. 25 early last Monday morning.

Charged is Piotr Deptula, 33, of Kingham Rd.

## Corrections

In the March 8 edition of *The Independent & Free Press*, nurse Kay Giberson was incorrectly identified.

Also in the March 10 edition, Georgetown Rebel swimmer Laura Evans was incorrectly identified.

*The Independent & Free Press* regrets the errors.



## ZOOM TOOTH WHITENING SYSTEM

*Shade changes of 6 to 10 shades in about an hour*

 your smile says so much.

*Cosmetic Dentistry*

22 Guelph Street  
downtowngeorgetowndental.com

(905)877-4371